



## SRC Calendar:

<b>Monday Feb. 14</b>	<b>VALENTINE'S DAY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>10 am:</b> Hearing on election bills in Senate Gov Ops (SHR 2-Live on TVW)</li> <li>• <b>1:30 pm:</b> Hearing on Gov. Locke's budget proposal in Senate W&amp;M (SHR 4-Live on TVW)</li> <li>• <b>1:30 pm:</b> Hearing on special license plate bills in Senate Transportation (SHR 1)</li> <li>• <b>3:30 pm:</b> Hearing on state employees health savings account option (SB 5202-Parlette) in Senate Health Care (SHR 4-Live on TVW)</li> <li>• <b>6 pm:</b> House Judiciary hearing on medical malpractice reforms (HHR B-Live on TVW).</li> <li>• <b>6-8 pm:</b> Election reform town hall (Des Moines)</li> </ul>
<b>Tuesday Feb. 15</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Higher education day:</b> Est. attendance: 300.</li> <li>• <b>10 am:</b> Work session on managing livestock nutrients in Senate Ag (SHR 3)</li> <li>• <b>6 pm:</b> House Commerce and Labor hearing (HHR C-Live on TVW) on "Retro" worker safety rating program.</li> </ul>
<b>Wednesday, Feb. 16</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>8 am:</b> Hearing on school employee possession of pornography on school grounds (SB 5677-Benton) in Senate Ed (SHR 1-Live on TVW)</li> <li>• <b>10 am:</b> Session/Caucus</li> <li>• <b>6 pm:</b> AWC reception (Red Lion Hotel)</li> <li>• <b>6-8 pm:</b> Election reform town hall (Pasco)</li> </ul>
<b>Thursday Feb. 17</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>6:45 am:</b> AWC breakfast with Gov. Gregoire (Red Lion Hotel)</li> <li>• <b>8 am:</b> House Health Care hearing (HHR A) on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Pay-or-Play: Fees for large employers not providing health insurance to employees (HB 1702-Cody)</li> <li>◦ Tobacco product sampling (SB 5048-Oke)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>8:30 am:</b> Tree fruit industry report in Senate Ag (SHR 3)</li> <li>• <b>10 am:</b> NFIB/IBA small business rally</li> <li>• <b>Noon:</b> Legislative Ethics Board Meeting (SHR 1)</li> <li>• <b>3:30 pm:</b> Senate Health Care hearing (SHR 4-Live on TVW) on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Pay-or-Play Fees for large employers not providing health insurance to employees (SB 5637-Keiser)</li> <li>◦ Allowing small businesses to join the Basic Health Plan (SB 5722-Keiser)</li> <li>◦ Expand Health Care Authority health plan options for businesses (SB 5472-Keiser)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>5:30-8:30 pm:</b> Old Timers Night (Olympia Elk's Club)</li> <li>• <b>6 pm:</b> Tri-Cities reception (Red Lion Hotel)</li> </ul>
<b>Friday Feb. 18</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>7 am:</b> Land trust conservation breakfast with Ralph Munro (Governor House, Ramada Inn)</li> <li>• <b>8 am:</b> House State Gov Ops hearing on election reforms (HHR D-Live on TVW)</li> </ul>
<b>Fri/Sat/Sun Feb. 18/19/20</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Lincoln Day Dinners</li> </ul>

**WRONG!**

## for Washington

### Pay-or-Play:

Senate Republicans' top priority remains getting Washington back to work. **Senate Bill 5637**, a health care proposal by Democrats, undermines that effort by increasing unemployment and punishing employers.

For large businesses not offering employees health care coverage, the state would collect a fee for providing Basic Health Plan coverage to those employees. The bill has several adverse side effects:

- Conservative estimate of the cost: \$1.6 billion!
- When all is said and done, this bill only ensures health insurance for 18 percent of the state's 850,000 uninsured.
- Businesses providing health coverage for their employees may end up owing the state money for businesses that don't.

It is estimated that as a result of this legislation, 25,500 employees will become unemployed statewide.

Those who lose their jobs are likely to be female, poor, minority and less educated.

### An ironic twist to the legislation:

- 3,300 of those who will lose their jobs will also lose their employer-based health insurance coverage.

## SRC in the News

▪ **On the Supreme Court ruling eliminating the state death tax:** Enough of them (legislators) passed up on the opportunity to bring the state's estate tax into compliance with federal reforms and, in so doing this year's \$1.8 billion budget shortfall is falling even shorter. Local Republican senators at the time, Sens. **Don Benton**, Don Carlson, **Jim Honeyford** and **Joe Zarelli** are to be commended for their "yes" votes on that bill, even though they were outvoted by 25 "nays" in the 49-member body. (*Columbian*, 2-6-05)

▪ **On malpractice reform initiatives:** It remains to be seen whether or not two malpractice reform initiatives will pass through the Legislature or go to voters on the November ballot. State **Senator Joyce Mulliken**, R-Ephrata, voiced concern about the high cost of malpractice insurance which has run some doctors out of the state. "We know that we have to get medical malpractice costs lowered to lower the liability insurance that physicians, hospitals and emergency rooms have to pay to have liability coverage," she said. (*Columbia Basin Herald*, 2-9-05)